DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 173 CE 035 018

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TITLE Stewardship in Community Education: The Merlyn Effect.
PUB DATE 8 Dec 82
NOTE 13p.; Presented at the Annual Convention of the National Community Education Association (17th, Atlanta, GA, December 8, 1982).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; *Administrator Responsibility; *Administrator Role; *Community Education; *Educational Administration; Interpersonal Relationship; Job Skills; Leadership; Mentors; Models; Needs Assessment; *Personnel Directors; *Personnel Management; Planning; Resource Allocation
IDENTIFIERS Brigham Young University UT; *Stewardship Model

ABSTRACT

Stewardship is the name given to a theory and model for educational leadership and administration developed by the Department of Educational Administration at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. In the stewardship theory, the job of the personnel administrator is to make it safe for others to find their own best ways of doing things to accomplish the tasks and reach the goals of the individuals and the organization. Thus, the steward's role is analogous to that of the wizard Merlyn who served as King Arthur's tutor and mentor. Stewardship theory focuses on three generations of concepts and skills: human interactions, effective job skills, and determining what ought to be. The stewardship model has five continuously interrelated process components that can guide the actions of an effective and efficient personnel administrator. These are assessment, appointment, allocation, agency, and accountability. Personnel administrators must actually be able to designate responsibilities to be performed. They must also have the autonomy to allocate available human, financial, physical, and time resources. In addition, wise personnel directors must give others the opportunity to exert autonomy, creativity, and initiative in carrying out their responsibilities. Finally, personnel administrators must be accountable for their stewardships. (MN)

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STEWARDSHIP IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION: THE MERLYN EFFECT

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STEWARDSHIP IN COMMUNITY EDUCATION: THE MERLYN EFFECT

by
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"Don't let it be forgot that once there was a spot for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot." Camelot, the story of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table is based on T.H. White's book, "The Once And Future King."

You will recall that the story begins with Arthur's happy youth in the castle of Sir Ector where Merlyn, the Magician, introduced him to the ideologies of justice and harmony on which the future king would create civilization and the famous Round Table. Arthur was placed on the throne by destiny, but there was a darker fate that dictated the king's ignorant siring of an illegitimate son and forced his wife, Gwenevere, and his most noble knight, Lancelot, into each other's arms, thus causing rivalry, deceit, and jealousy among the knights. These proved to be King Arthur's downfall. Forgotten were his achievements for the might of right and for peace on earth. Forgotten, too, was his own anguish at having done his best and failed. Had the quest led nowhere? The Round Table was dispersed. Gwenevere was besieged by Mordred and his Thrashers in the Tower of London and Lancelot was exiled in France, both victims of Mordred's obsession to gain Arthur's throne.

The play ends with King Arthur finding a youth who was a stowaway and who aspired to the Round Table. King Arthur knighted him and sent him back to England charged with telling another generation about the noble ideals of Camelot, justice, harmony, the worth of man and his ideas, self-reliance and truth on which to build again a civilization based on the might of right and peace on earth.

These noble ideals were the teachings of Merlyn to the young Arthur. Merlyn the tutor, provided all that was necessary for Arthur to succeed, and then left him to exercise his stewardship. This became, in effect, the "Merlyn Effect."

Remember, Merlyn was a magician, a wizard, an alchemist, a philosopher, a member of a cult which was the forerunner of the teaching profession. These were men who studied and understood natural laws and could, therefore, explain and manipulate things that confounded the unlearned. For the reason that any unexplained phenomenon was regarded by those who did not understand magic, these men were thought to possess magic and were held in great awe.

Merlyn was young Arthur's tutor, his mentor, and he taught by providing experiences for his charge and then by asking provoking questions, leading the pupil to correct conclusions in the quest for truth. The affect was one of facilitating the learning, not the telling or doing for the student. Merlyn would temporarily transform young Wart, as he was called, into animals that he might understand the political idealogies found in the animal kingdom and come to understand man and his own ultimate task or stewardship.

Young Arthur's anxiety in his first transformation experience led him to ask Merlyn to accompany him. Merlyn consented, "Just this once. But in the future you will have to go by yourself. Education is experience, and the essence of experience is self-reliance," Merlyn had said.

In the end when King Arthur was preparing for the final battle, his old tutor, Merlyn, reappeared to him and Arthur asked if he had come to save him. To this Merlyn answered,

> "Nobody can be saved from anything, unless they save themselves. It is hopeless doing things for people--it is often very dangerous indeed to do things at all--and the only thing worth doing for the race is to increase its stock of ideas. Then if you make available a larger stock of ideas, then people are at liberty to help themselves from out of it. By this process the means of improvement is offered, to be accepted or rejected freely, and there is a faint hope of progress in the course of the millennia. Such is the business of the philosopher, to open new ideas. It is not his business to impose them on people."

King Arthur had further questioned Merlyn, "The chivalry and the Round Table which you made me invent, what were these?"

"They were ideas," said the philosopher Merlyn, firmly. "Ideas which established a foundation on which other ideas could be thought about in earnest. An experiment and experiments lead to new experiments until truth is found." In reality, this is a cyclical even a spiraling process.

The Merlyn Affect is observed when the individual voluntarily chooses a cause greater than himself because it is more valued than self. In other words, the Merlyn Affect is the cause of truth, the recognition and acknowledgement of What Is? "For might was never right: the state never excelled the individual: and the future lies with the personal soul," Merlyn had said, and the king had learned and accepted his stewardship.

* * *

"Stewardship" is the name given to a theory and model of educational leadership and administration developed by the Department of Educational Administration at Brigham Young University, a 26,000 student university located in Provo, Utah. BYU is a private school sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (LDS), popularly called the Mormon Church. During recent years intensive study has been done of the variety of administration and leadership theories and models extant. None seems to be more applicable to personnel administration than the Stewardship theory and model.

Simply stated, a steward is <u>one who has a responsibility for</u>

which he is accountable to others, much as a mentor to his students- a leader to the group.

A steward in personnel administration is an officially designated person who is responsible for the administration of personnel matters at some level within an organization such as a school district or a community college or a business enterprise. Of course, this definition can be extended to multiple layers of stewardship from the top to the bottom of almost any organization.

The focus of Stewardship is on the individual, functioning alone or as a member of a group, but ultimately producing self-reliance and self-actualization.

In the Stewardship theory, the job of the personnel administrator is to make it safe for others to find their own best ways of doing things to accomplish the tasks and reach the goals of the individuals and organizations. The leader must find the effective balance of freedom and safety for others to exert their own skills. The leader must identify and make legitimate both the hazards and the opportunities for others. Thus, the analogy of the tutor Merlyn who made it safe for Arthur by providing him with all the information necessary for him to succeed as the author of civilization or organized behavior in the fable.

Implicit in the "making it safe . . . " concept is the need to identify the risks, hazards, pitfalls and obstacles which potentially could bring about failure at the point in time when they would be just that, potentials. Merlyn certainly provided Arthur with the identity of some of these situations or conditions which in reality could be labeled cautions or situations which would demand considerations of alternative courses of action to pursue.

The Stewardship theory is based on three dimensions of individual and organizational behavior. In order that these three dimensions may be viewed in this perspective, a relatively neutral term, "generation," is used to label them as First, Second, and Third Generation concepts and skills. First Generation concepts are those that deal with how people treat each other as individuals or as in groups. Second Generation concepts are those that deal with how people do their jobs. Third Generation concepts are those that deal with what should be or what should be done in the future. A five-component Stewardship model is explained later.

STEWARDSHIP: THREE GENERATIONS

First Generation concepts and skills focus on how people treat each other. Recent studies in organizational development have revealed that many people have difficulty being effective due primarily to problems of human relationships rather than to a lack of technical skills. Faulty human relationships seem to account for nearly 80 percent of the problems, while lack of technical skill and knowledge account for nearly 20 percent. An examination of development training

programs, shows that typically nearly 80 percent of the resources are devoted to technical training, and only about 20 percent to effective human relationships! The Stewardship theory and model proposes to more nearly balance these proportions.

First Generation skills and concepts emphasize understanding of self and others, individually and in organizations. Considerable attention has been given to writers who have dealt with concepts such as decision making and motivation. For example, Abraham Maslow has indicated that in an hierarchy of needs, people move through various stages of maturity. The mobility from one stage to another more mature stage is through satisfying particular needs, enabling individuals and organizations to move through physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization stages as illustrated in Figure 1.

The Stewardship theory stresses the importance of human relationships as people and organizations move through the hierarchy of needs. Self actualization demands interaction. The more effectively we interact, the more likely that self-actualization needs will be met.

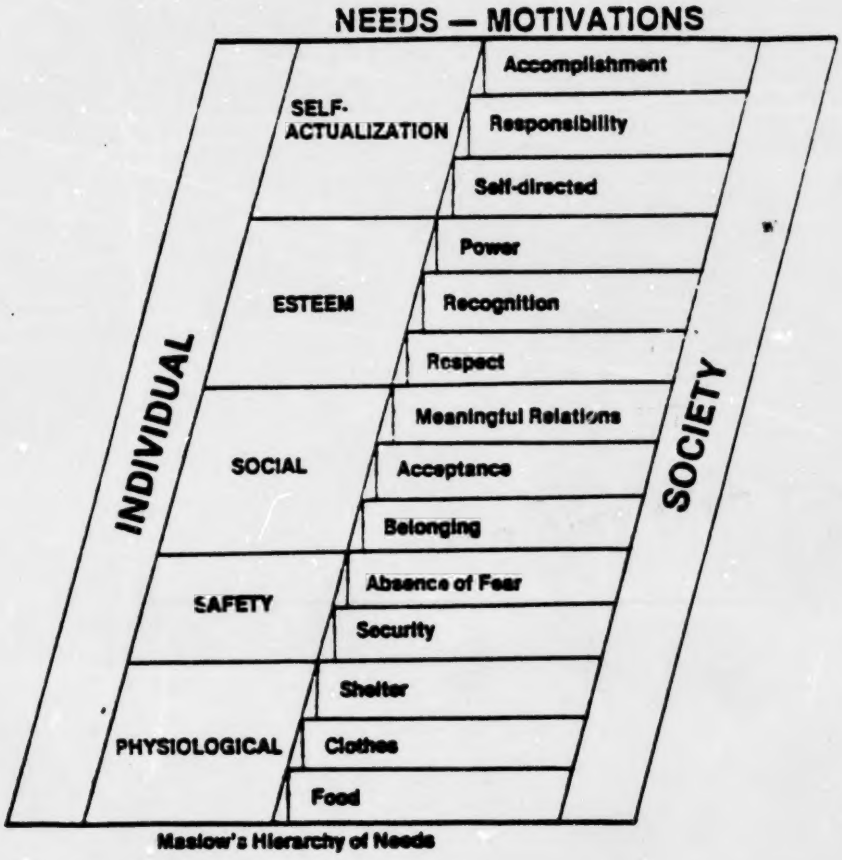
Herzberg has contended that in general the American society has largely surpassed physiological and safety needs, that people are in many instances motivated by social, esteem, and self-actualization needs for meaningful relations, recognition, and accomplishment. Since human relationships form the basis for achieving these needs, First Generation concepts and skills are the basis for the Stewardship theory.

An additional cornerstone in the development of the Stewardship theory of leadership is provided from the works of two other prominent writers, Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard. From their studies in the decade of the 70's they state "our greatest failure as humans has been the inability to secure cooperation and understanding with others." They identify the need for human relationship skills development as being complimentary to the technical and conceptual skills necessary for effective leadership. Do you recall the idea of Arthur's Round Table? If human relations were ever considered, surely it was in the ideals represented in the fabled Camelot.

Second Generation skills and concepts of the Stewardship theory are those that focus on how people do their jobs. The personnel administrator must be effective and efficient in tasks such as hiring, scheduling, budgeting, payroll, communications, needs assessment and many other technical tasks in the typical myriad of responsibilities. Hersey and Blanchard have suggested that technical skills relate to the ability to use knowlege, method, technique, and materials required for specific tasks.

For example, Richard I. Lester, Director Educational Plans and Programs, Leadership and Management Development Center, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, wrote in the Personnel Journal in November 1981, of several principles and concepts of leadership stating that "When perserverance and a willingness to learn are present, leadership skills can be learned." He specifically treated such skills as:

FIGURE 1



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

1. Applying "principles and techniques that inspire motivation and productivity when working with people, tasks and situations in order to accomplish the company's objectives."

2. In understanding "the nature of leadership, one must first understand the nature of power, for leadership is a special form of power involving relationships with people."

3. In developing these relationships, "leaders must successfully fuse organizational and personal needs in a way that permits people and organizations to reach peaks of mutual achievement and satisfaction."

Continuing, Lester reminds us that there are three basic elements of leadership, "the leader, the follower and the situation." Personnel administrators can be taught/trained to function in ways which exemplify leadership traits. Again, Lester suggests some specifics which include accommodating skills of:

1. Being visible and interacting with workers on the job.

2. Caring for the people and organization.

3. Having concern for quality versus quantity.

4. Delegating tasks that require employees to make decisions.

Lester identified several characteristics of good corporate leaders which are also characteristics of good personnel administrators. These are:

1. Technical & professional competence.

2. Enthusiasm.

3. Communications skills.

4. High ethical standards.

5. Flexibility.

6. Vision.

Again, these are but examples of Second Generation Stewardship skills and concepts, those that in personnel administration focus on "How people do their jobs."

Third Generation concepts and skills are those that focus on the future, on what ought to be, on what should be done. It's often referred to as "vision," an ability to see how all the parts fit into the whole. It's taking all the ideas resulting from first and second generation skills and forming them into what is analogously referred to as Camelot, the result of King Arthur's ideas and vision. The current jargon for doing this is "futuring" for application of these

concepts and skills. There is even a society for the study of the future and a journal, "The Futurist."

Personnel administrators must have vision and skill both in the short and the long range, if they are to be effective in developing their full potential. Third Generation concepts and skills are most effective in working with groups. Third Generation skills include facilitating, goal setting, planning, development of flow chart techniques, budget analysis, and the use of some specific techniques such as Delphi, PERT, MBO, Critical Path, Failure Avoidance and Zero Base as well as modifications and combinations thereof.

The Stewardship theory asserts that Third Generation concepts and skills are critical, deserving special attention but often neglected or ignored in leadership development programs.

THE STEWARDSHIP MODEL

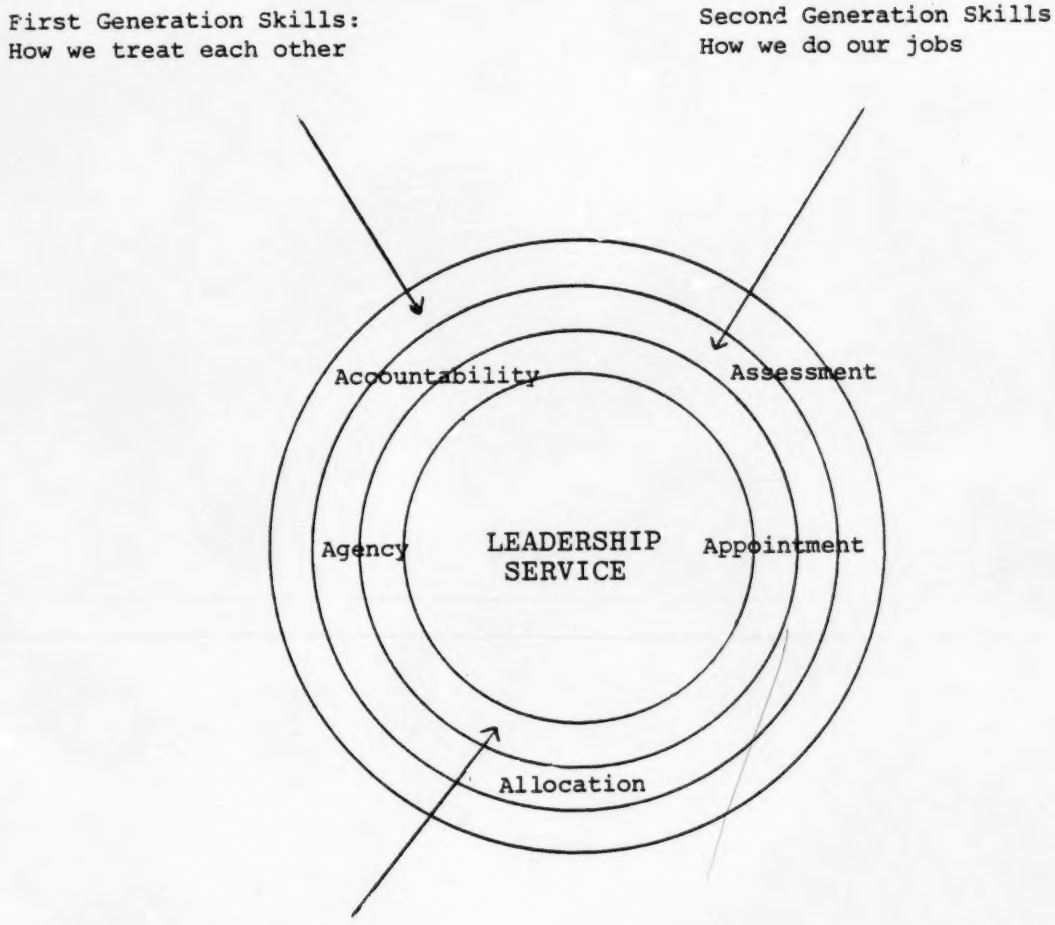
As presented above, the Stewardship theory is based on three "generations" of concepts and skills. A five-component process model illustrates the integration and coordination of the three generations. Figure 2 shows that concepts and skills in all three generations are applied in all five components of the Stewardship model. The central purpose of Stewardship is leadership and service. The personnel administrator engages in five major kinds of activity to be effective and efficient in providing the service. Assessment, Appointment, Allocation, Agency, and Accountability are alliterative mainly by accident, though useful as a mnemonic device.

Although the model depicts the five components arranged cyclicly, experience shows that all five components are in process simultaneously even in a spiraling form. Each component is emphasized at appropriate times. The important thing to remember is that all five components are critical, none may be neglected or ignored with impunity.

Assessment. Assessment, as it relates to the Stewardship model, is the deriving of an overview of all of the circumstances upon which decisions are rendered by the decision maker, the personnel administrator. Within this component one deals with the organizational and individual needs as they are determined in order to accomplish the goals and objectives of the individual or the organization. Assessments can be made by observation or through the employment of technical skills of questionnaires and survey instruments, or even through commonly used activities such as brainstorming. To the personnel administrator the basis for all decisions and activities is assessment.

Appointment. Personnel administrators need to be in a position to receive from the authority base, whether it be the superintendent, the director, the coordinator, the principal, the public, the Board of Education or whatever, the actual designation of certain responsibilities that are to be performed. Specific assignments or appointments are made whether they be for the individual or the organization within which the individual functions; whether they be for the

Figure 2 The Stewardship Model



administrator or for the recipient. The actual assignment must be made clear and succinct in such a way that both parties understand exactly what is expected in terms of authority and responsibility, as well as how success or failure is to be determined.

Allocation. A third component of the Stewardship model deals with the allocation of resources of four basic kinds. One resource is the financial support available in a particular organization, school district, college or whatever. A second resource is people, the kind of resource with which personnel administration is most concerned. Human resources are extremely important because often human resources can be employed to alleviate the need for attention to the financial through the use of volunteers. A third resource is physical facilities. Type and quantity of physical facilities will vary with the organization and its own needs. An oft forgotten resource is that of time. We all have the same amount of time so the issue is how we use it.

The personnel administrator has the administrative stewardship to allocate resources to make sure that all necessary and available human, financial, physical and time resources are identified, organized and used effectively and efficiently.

Agency. The wise personnel administrator has the opportunity and responsibility to make it possible for other persons to exert autonomy, creativity, and initiative in carrying out their responsibilities, in other words, to find their own best ways. The term "free agency" is often used, recognizing that there are laws, policies, regulations, budgets, tradition and other factors which influence planning and implementation processes. Personnel administrators must have opportunities for failure as well as success and learn from both. A significant aspect of the Merlyn affect is experiences from which self-reliance is acquired. The wise mentor will provide for the learner an abundance of options from which he may choose and allows him the leeway to make such choices. Recall Merlyn's answer to the king: "It is hopeless doing things for people, to impose ideas on them. It is the business of the mentor to supply ideas only."

Accountability. Personnel administrators must be accountable for their stewardships. Hopefully in being accountable, we will deserve the scriptual accolade, "well done, thou good and faithful servant." Accountability hinges on the other components of the stewardship model: proper assessment; clear appointment of task related responsibility and authority; allocation of the essential human, financial, physical and time resources; and, agency, or the opportunity to find our own best ways through creativity and initiative.

As are the other components, accountability is a continuous process, not a terminating event. The steward, the personnel administrator, at every level must understand the goals, know what is expected, have access to the necessary resources, have the freedom to do things his way--then he can be held accountable for the process and results. The self-actualized person, the self-reliant individual

who accepts his stewardship and successfully executes all the components of it actualizes the Merlyn Affect, and does so almost as if it were magic to those who do not understand the Stewardship theory.

* * *

Consider a Recipe for Failure in the application of the principles of stewardship as they relate to personnel management.

There seems to be agreement that there are some basic functions of personnel management. Numbered among these functions are at least the functions of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling. Consider assessment and, first, the planning function.

The first ingredient of a Recipe for Failure in planning is:

1. Two parts of miscalculations of time; long range plans are for too long periods of time and short range plans are for too short periods.

2. Four parts of incorrect assessments of resources available to carry out the plans. Resources of time, human, physical, and financial nature are misassessed.

3. Five parts of incorrect assessments of types of change that should be considered in the planning function. These would relate to planning for self change, planning for staff change, planning for changes in what we do and planning for change in the things expected of those with and for whom we work.

Some ingredients in the recipe related to organizing are:

1. Two parts of misassessment of the hierarchical structure of the organization. Specifically, reference is made to assessment of the lines of authority related to superordinates as well as subordinates.

2. One measure of the inability to assess needs and ways of meeting those needs while organizing to accomplish objectives.

3. Four quantities of misassessments of matching individuals to desired tasks.

Consider Appointment or Assignment:

1. Thirty six measures of inappropriate appointment of a principal to a school consisting of 31 faculty members and five support staff members.

2. Six parts of misdirection of staff-development or in-service training. These consist of appropriate training for inappropriate tasks as well as inappropriate training for

appropriate tasks. Also, no training for numerous tasks and excessive training for few tasks are included.

Ingredients in the Recipe for Failure with regard to Allocation of resources consist, in part, of:

1. Eight parts of misallignment of long and short range planning with the four basic resources of finance, personnel, facilities and time.

2. Three measures of misplanning for change. Resources are misallocated for rapid change, slow change and even no change.

Related to Agency the recipe includes:

1. Three units of action on the part of a personnel manager who misdirects either his professional staff or his clerical and technical staff. Here it may not be even in what he chooses to say but how he says it.

2. Four decisions which violate ethical, legal, policy or financial aspects of the operation of the system.

Ingredients of Accountability in the recipe often times when discussed are related only to the management function of controlling. However, accountability does impact on all functions. Two examples of accountability related to the controlling function of personnel management in the Recipe for Failure are:

1. Twelve parts of misinterpretation of standards against which performance ought to be made.

2. Six parts of analyzing consequences which do not relate to appropriate alternatives.

SUMMARY

The Stewardship theory focuses on three "generations" of concepts and skills: human interactions, effective job skills, and determining what ought to be. The Stewardship model has five continuously interrelated process components which can guide the actions of an effective and efficient personnel administrator: Assessment, Appointment, Allocation, Agency, and Accountability. The Stewardship theory and model can be applied at every level of personnel administration.

Stewardship in its most complete and refined application in reality is The Merlyn Affect.